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PRESS RELEASE

MONUSCO ending its mission in South Kivu after more than 20 Years of Service

Kinshasa, 25 June 2024 — The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) today closed its Bukavu office, the nerve centre of its South Kivu operations for more than 20 years with a high-level event. On 30 June, as agreed with the Government of the DRC, the Mission will complete its withdrawal from South Kivu marking the end of the first phase of its disengagement from the country.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in the DRC and Head of MONUSCO, Ms. Bintou Keita, Prime Minister H.E. Judith Suminwa Tuluka, the Governor of South Kivu, Mr. Jean-Jacques Purusi and other high-level representatives of the United Nations and DRC government participated in the closure ceremony. During the event, MONUSCO donated assets worth US \$10 million to the DRC authorities and a range of Congolese partners. The Mission is also transferring to the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) a newly constructed helipad and a base in Rutemba, near Uvira, valued at US \$1.5 million. The ceremony took place in Kavumu, 32 km from Bukavu.

“This has been an immense joint effort with the government of the DRC. Despite the many challenges we have faced, the withdrawal of troops and equipment has been orderly and given the time pressure, the first phase has been largely successful,” said Ms Keita. “It’s the dawn of a new era for the province. Ensuring peace and protecting civilians lies fully in the hands of Congolese authorities, who are undertaking this responsibility in close coordination with community and other local leaders, and with the support of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.”

During its disengagement from South Kivu, which started in January 2024, MONUSCO transferred to national authorities or closed seven bases or facilities (Baraka, Bukavu, Bunyakiri, Kamanyola, Kavumu, Rutemba and Sange), in addition to 15 installations. While MONUSCO has ceased operations in Mikenge, Minembwe and Uvira bases, the transfer to the FARDC will be finalized in the coming weeks.

Since 2002, MONUSCO’s presence in South Kivu has provided direct physical protection to nearly three million people and supported the FARDC through joint operations, patrols, capacity building and medical evacuations. The Mission has helped set up dozens of local protection committees and civilian alert networks. It has worked closely with the DRC authorities and local communities to address the root causes of conflict by promoting dialogue and social cohesion,



developing infrastructure, improving human rights, and strengthening the capacity of the police, justice and corrections systems in the province. Over the past twenty years, MONUSCO has helped demobilize more than 4,600 combatants and children associated with armed groups and has collected and destroyed over 44,000 rounds of ammunition and explosives. The Mission has played a pivotal role in multiple electoral cycles, transporting 30 000 kg of election materials to South Kivu's electoral districts in last year's presidential elections.

“As we end our journey in South Kivu, I thank the civilian and uniformed personnel who have contributed to peace and security in South Kivu. Your courage and dedication in some of peacekeeping's most challenging circumstances fill my heart. I pay tribute to all those who have lost their lives in the line of duty,” said Ms. Keita. “While MONUSCO has withdrawn from South Kivu, we are committed to carrying out mandate in Ituri and North Kivu.”

As of July 1st, 2024, a residual team of 34 civilians will remain in South Kivu to help United Nations agencies, funds and programmes maintain community alert networks, child protection and community dialogue. The DRC government, MONUSCO, UN agencies, funds and programmes, as well as representatives from the international NGOs and civil society produced a provincial roadmap to facilitate the transfer of MONUSCO's responsibilities to the government, with the support of UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes and other partners. This will help ensure that the gain made during MONUSCO's presence are preserved once the Mission has departed.



Additional notes on MONUSCO's contribution in South Kivu at a glance:

Since the Bukavu office was established in 2002, MONUSCO has fostered peace and stability, in South Kivu. At its peak, the UN Peacekeepers numbered 5,000 with 32 military bases which, over the years, provided direct physical protection to nearly three million people. MONUSCO's presence in South Kivu supported the FARDC with joint operations, patrols, capacity building and medical evacuations.

In addition to its military activities, MONUSCO's 550 civilian staff in South Kivu have played a crucial role in protecting civilians, working closely with the DRC authorities and local communities to address the root causes of conflict by promoting dialogue, social cohesion, improving infrastructure, human rights, justice and security sector reform. As a part of these efforts, MONUSCO has implemented hundreds of small-scale and low-cost quick impact projects, which respond to the needs expressed by local communities.

Over the past 20 years, the Mission has helped demobilize more than 4,600 combatants and children associated with armed groups and has collected and destroyed over 44,000 rounds of ammunition and explosives. Since 2018, 20 non-state armed groups have signed unilateral commitments or roadmaps to better protect children and over 1,335 minors have been voluntarily released.

MONUSCO has significantly bolstered the justice system in South Kivu with initiatives that have helped investigate and prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and grave human rights violations and abuses including conflict-related sexual violence, leading to nearly 80 convictions. The mission also provided support to correction facilities, thereby contributing to a conducive environment for security.

The United Nations Police (UNPOL) has helped build the capacity of the Congolese National Police (PNC) by developing infrastructure, constructing police stations and providing equipment, as well as enhancing the capacity of PNC officers with training in community policing, the protection of civilians, forensics, sexual and gender-based violence investigations. MONUSCO has also facilitated the establishment of several local mechanisms for civilian protection, including setting up dozens of local protection committees and civilian alert networks.

Since 2006, MONUSCO has been pivotal in supporting electoral processes. Last year, the Mission transported 30 000 kg of election materials to South Kivu's electoral districts. In previous election cycles, the Mission has facilitated access to observers and trained local election officials.

The withdrawal of MONUSCO from South Kivu is not synonymous with the departure of the UN from the DRC, but rather its transition in the country. Leading the first phase of the disengagement process, South Kivu established a Provincial Integrated Transition Team (PITT) which is a model for the future phases of disengagement. This team brought together the DRC



government, MONUSCO, UN agencies, funds and programmes, as well as representatives from the international NGOs and civil society, ensuring an inclusive and transparent process.

A provincial roadmap was developed by the PITT focusing on several main areas including security, protection of civilians, supporting security and rule of law institutions and assisting the Congolese government's Demobilisation, Disarmament, Community and Social Reintegration Programme (P-DDRCS) program. This roadmap aims to facilitate the transfer of MONUSCO's responsibilities to the government, with the support of UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes and other partners, ensuring the preservation of achievements and supporting a responsible disengagement.